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AN AUTOMATIC DRINKING FOUNTAIN FOR MINKS*

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One of the perplexing problems confronting mink raisers is to furnish the animals an adequate supply of clean, fresh drinking water for a reasonable length of time. Small metal dishes are quite commonly used but they are unsatisfactory because they are easily tipped over. The water spilled causes a damp and unsanitary condition in the pen and leaves the animals without drinking water until the next watering period. Such dishes also serve as bathtubs for the minks, but the combination bathtub-drinking pan has no place on the intelligently managed mink farm because of the filth that accumulates. To clean the drinking pans continually and supply fresh water require excessive labor, and this is costly.

A simple, inexpensive, automatic drinking trough that answers every requirement has been developed at the United States Fur Animal Experiment Station, Saratoga Springs, N. Y. The construction is simple, and any interested mink farmer can easily make one if he has the tools, material, and inclination.

The necessary tools are a soldering outfit, tin snips, hammer, and a pair of round-nosed pliers. The materials consist of a glass quart fruit jar with screw top, a small piece of 28-gage sheet metal, solder, and rosin. If these are not otherwise easily obtainable, the village tinsmith can doubtless supply them.

Take a piece of 28-gage metal 5 1/2 inches long by 2-1/8 inches wide and trim it into the keystone shape shown in figure 1, the narrowest end being 1 3/4 inches wide. Draw a line parallel to and 3/4 inch from the widest end of the metal. This part will be the deep end of the trough. Then lay out the bottom of the trough by locating the center line of the metal lengthwise and drawing a line on each side of this center line parallel to and 7/16 inch from it. The material is now marked out for

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bending, but first it is necessary to mark out the little end wings at A and A', for they are to reinforce the end and are necessary to prevent leakage. This is easily done by measuring $5/16$ inch along the bending line at A and A', and $3/8$ inch on the outside edges, the measurements to be made from the line that had been drawn parallel to and $3/4$ inch from the wide end of the metal. Cut along these marginal lines and along the lines at A and A' that separate the wings from the middle of the "keystone". Then bend the sides upward as indicated (fig. 1) to form the trough, and the end upward at right angles to the trough, and lap the wings at A and A' over the end piece and solder them to it.

The porcelain in the jar cap is removed by breaking with a hammer, and a $1/4$ -inch water hole is punched in the cover near the rim (fig. 2). Flatten the trough at the open end and solder it to the jar cover, being careful to see that the water hole is not closed by melted solder. "Crimp" the sides of the trough near the jar cap to make certain that the water in the trough will be level with the water hole (fig. 3.)

Cut a hole 1 inch square in the front or back of each mink pen about 2 inches above the floor to insert the trough of the drinking fountain. A piece of baling wire 11 inches long bent as illustrated in figure 4, the ends stapled to the wall of the pen (fig. 5), will hold the fountain in place and allow easy removal for refilling. Fill the jar with water and screw on the cap with trough attached. Invert the fountain and put it in place.

Drinking fountains should be placed in the shade and filled daily during extremely hot weather, but in spring, early summer, and fall, only every other day. Jars will need washing only every two weeks, a considerable saving in labor over the old method.

FIG. 1

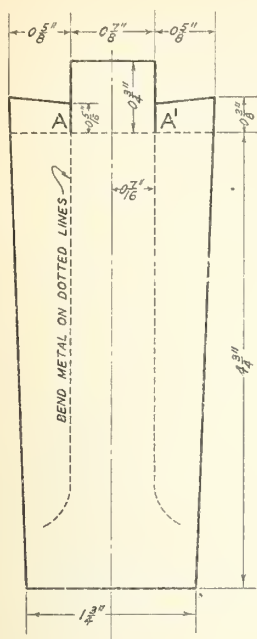


FIG. 2

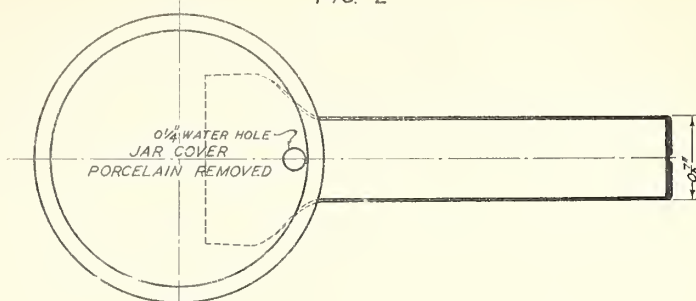


FIG. 3

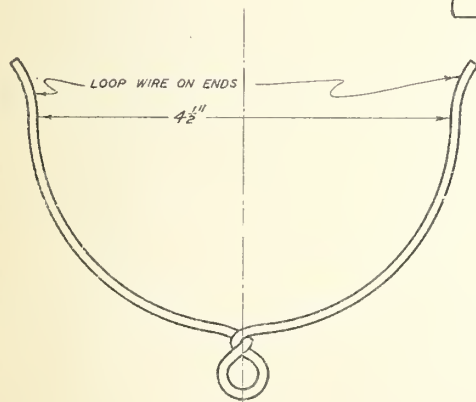
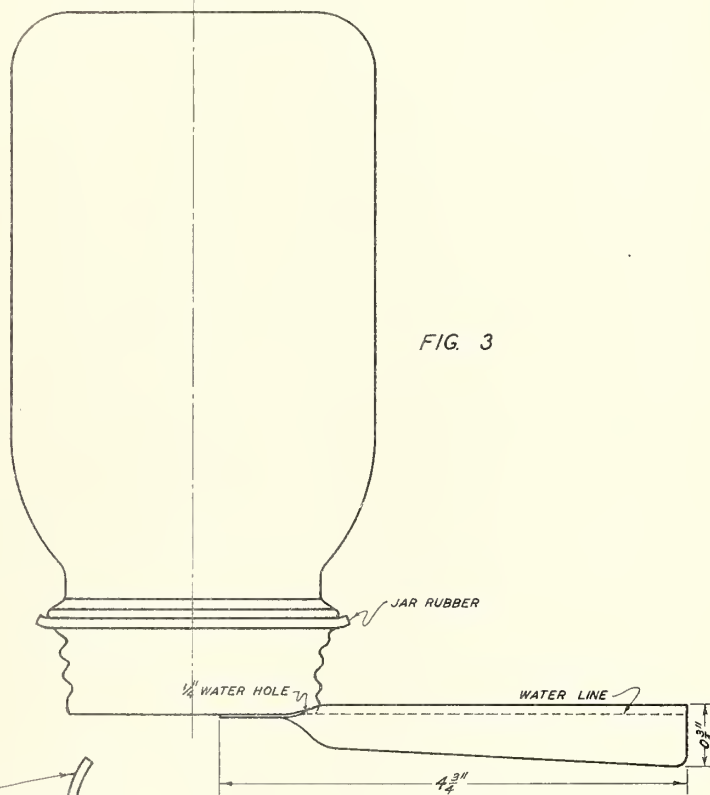


FIG. 4

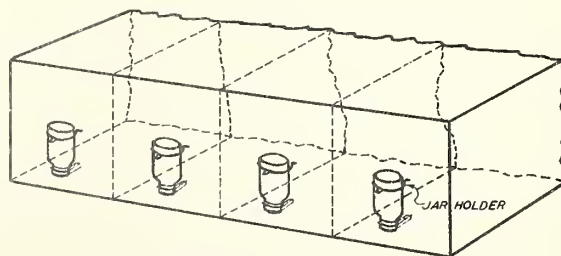


FIG. 5

